

## PÊCHE ISLAND: A BRIEF DESCRIPTION



photo © Chris Matthieu

- An uninhabited 41 ha island owned and managed by the City of Windsor since 1999.
- Located at the head of the Detroit River near Lake St. Clair, 1.9 km east of Belle Isle and is 330 m from the Windsor shore.
- Reduced by erosion from almost 44 ha in 1965.
- The island is composed of shale and limestone bedrock overtopped by clay plain and sand spits.
- Four kilometers of man-made channels have been developed through the interior of the island to provide fresh water supply and increased opportunities for recreation.
- The island's original vegetation was Carolinian forest, but much of the original flora and fauna was disrupted by human development.
- Today the island is largely woodland made up of both open and closed mixed shrub thicket and two unusual forest types: 'Norway maple-mixed hardwood forest' and a 'silver maple-mixed hardwood forest'.
- There are a few remaining maple and oak trees that are more than 175 years old.
- The Island became a Provincial Park in 1974, and in 1999 was purchased by the City of Windsor and designated a City Park and Environmentally Sensitive Area.



photo © DRCC



photo © DRCC

## PÊCHE ISLAND DAY

Pêche Island Day is an annual celebration hosted by the DRCC and its member organizations since 2006 to highlight the island's ecology, biodiversity, and history as a part of the Detroit River. The Day also provides an opportunity for residents to visit and explore the island.



photo © DRCC

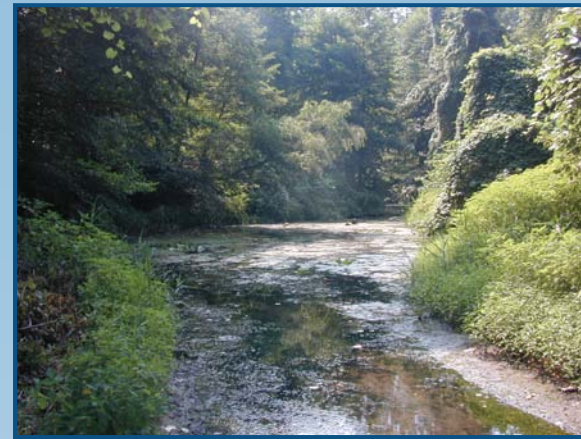


photo © Chris Matthieu

*We're all connected to the river. The Detroit River is an important resource that sustains fish, wildlife and people. That's why we must work together to protect and enhance the Detroit River and its watershed.*



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The **Detroit River Canadian Cleanup** is a community-based partnership between federal, provincial, municipal government, local industries, scientific researchers, environmental organizations, and concerned citizens. Its goal is to clean up, restore, and enhance the Detroit River ecosystem in order to remove it from the list of Great Lakes' Areas of Concern.



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# PÊCHE ISLAND





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## PÊCHE ISLAND ECOLOGY

Pêche Island is home to many rare plants and animals, including:

- 22 species of rare native plants (235 plant species documented in total)
- 2 rare reptile species
- Freshwater clams and mussels
- Birds that utilize the island include (but not limited to):
  - waterfowl: mute swan, mallard and Canada goose
  - hawks and eagles: Northern harrier, osprey, peregrine falcon, bald eagle
  - herons, cormorants and owls: Great blue heron, double-crested cormorant, green heron, Great horned owl
  - songbirds: Carolina wren, wood thrush, warblers

## PRESERVING PÊCHE ISLAND

The island's important native species are threatened by the increasing number of invasive species such as zebra mussel, Norway maple, and common reed. In an attempt to help the success of native plants and animals, a bald eagle nesting platform was installed and non-native Norway maple is removed to encourage native plant growth such as the Kentucky coffeetree.

Get involved in preserving Pêche Island and other local environmental treasures by joining the DRCC and other local environmental organizations such as the Essex County Field Naturalists' Club, Little River Enhancement Group and the Citizens Environment Alliance.

Visit [www.detroitriver.ca](http://www.detroitriver.ca) for more information.

## POINTS OF INTEREST

- 1 Remains of E. Harris' plans for an island playground (1968).
- 2 Hiram Walker's stone bridge and dredged canal. Walker also laid down large amounts of topsoil and planted trees and an orchard.
- 3 Ruins of Hiram Walker's buildings and break-wall (c. 1892). Walker developed significant portions of the island and built structures including a stable, greenhouse, icehouse and a large home.
- 4 Land once cleared for farming by Joseph Laforet and family (1800's).
- 5 Location of Chief Pontiac's summer home (c.1763).
- 6 Hiding place for contraband liquor during prohibition.



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